

Women's Studies Institute News

Above: Dr. Ricardo Romo, UTSA President presents Sandra Cisneros with proclamation



Below: Dr. Sonia Saldivar-Hull presents Cisneros with plaque



President Romo Declares March 1st Sandra Cisneros Day at UTSA

Sara Ramirez, WSI Staff Writer

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The Women's Studies Institute kicked off the festivities for Women's History Month with an opening reception at 4:00 p.m. on March 1, 2006, in the Assembly Room of the John Peace Library building. The reception honored the WSI Women's Advocate of the Year, award winning poet, novelist, lecturer, and artist, Sandra Cisneros. Co-chairs Rhonda Gonzales and Patricia Trujillo explained the recurring theme of Women's History Month, "Testimonios: Telling Our Stories," stating, "Over the years, the theme has proven that it is indeed a site for analysis that contextualizes the significance of gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and religion in ways that prompt exchanges on the UTSA campus that reverberate long after March leaves us."

President Ricardo Romo welcomed attendees to the reception and surprised not only the audience but also the WSI staff as he proclaimed March 1st as Sandra Cisneros day. As if this official proclamation weren't exciting enough, Dr. Romo also announced a UTSA endowed \$10,000 scholarship "in honor of this illustrious author." The endowment will fund the WSI scholarships which award \$500 annually to students of merit. "What an amazing way to commemorate Women's History Month," said WSI staff person, Patricia Trujillo. "Now we have an official day dedicated to a strong woman to kick off the month!"

Sonia Saldivar-Hull, director of the WSI, then introduced Cisneros and presented her with the 2006 Women's Advocate of the Year award. Dr. Saldivar-Hull explained, "From her first publication, *The House on Mango Street*, to her books of poetry, to the short story collection, *Woman Hollering Creek*, to the more recent *Caramelo*, Cisneros has opened up a space to critically engage the domestic sphere as a legitimate site of political theory. Because of her influence, women who once leaned their sadness on an elbow have gone on to become educators, politicians, writers, artists and community activists." Saldivar-Hull continued by citing Cisneros' many community actions from starting the Macondo Writing Workshop to utilizing her notoriety as a public figure to bring attention to social justice issues. "It is for these, and all the many things you have yet to do that we present you with the award for 'Women's Advocate of the Year,'" the WSI executive director proclaimed. (continued on page 11)

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Good company. The first three honorees of the Women's Studies Institute Women's Advocate of the Year Award. From left to right: Patricia Castillo (2005), Sandra Cisneros (2006), and Ginger Purdy (2004). The past advocates are the roots to a growing tradition of celebrating women's stories at UTSA.

Photo credits on this page: Mario Longoria

JUNTAS!

We can make a difference.

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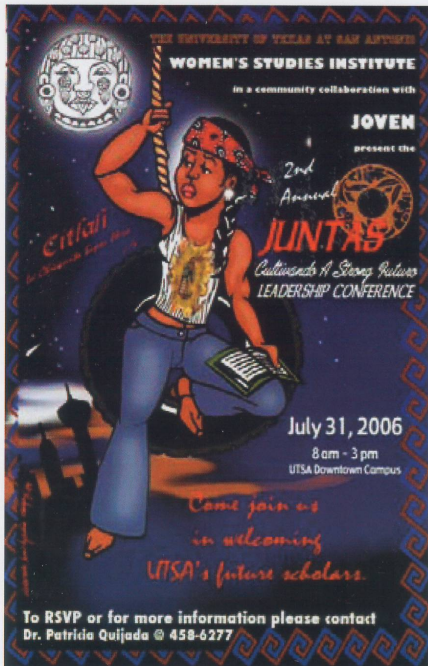
WSI Host Second Annual JUNTAS: Cultivando a Strong Futuro Leadership Conference for Girls

Patricia Quijada, Associate Director of WSI

The University of Texas at San Antonio Women's Studies Institute (WSI) organized the Second Annual JUNTAS: Cultivando a Stronger Futuro Conference on July 31, 2006 at the Downtown Campus. WSI worked collaboratively with JOVEN, a community based organization to select sixty young Chicanas between the ages of 9-12. This year's conference introduced Citlalita, a teenage Chicana superhero created by local artist, Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez. The girls learned about Citlalita's super hero qualities and explored their own super hero qualities.

The conference provided a space for the girls to engage in culturally relevant workshops aimed at integrating Mexican history, Meztizo Art, Chicana literature, and writing. The conference was organized by Patricia D. Quijada, Assistant Professor in the department of Counseling and Educational Psychology and Associate Director of the Women's Studies Institute. Culturally relevant workshops were facilitated by English Doctoral student and Ford Fellow, Patricia Trujillo and renowned local artist Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez. They worked collaboratively with UTSA women leaders to introduce the JUNTAS participants to the UTSA community and empower the girls to learn about multiple career opportunities.

Integral to the success of the conference was the support of many community members and UTSA staff and faculty who volunteered their time to share with the girls their work and career achievements. At this year's conference two outstanding active women from San Antonio, Susan Colorado-Burt, Associate Director of Learning Communities and Patricia Castillo, Executive Director of the PEACE Initiatives shared their experiences with inspirational keynote messages aimed at motivating the girls to pursue a higher education. The WSI was honored to provide two community activist awards to two mujeres, Patricia Trujillo and Ofelia Delgado, who have each demonstrated their dedication, commitment, and activism to issues of social justice both here in San Antonio and nationally. The conference was supported by the UTSA Women's Studies Institute and K-16 Initiatives. ♦



Poster designed by Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez. Used with permission.

Inside the Juntas Conference

Patricia Trujillo, WSI Staff Writer

The Juntas conference is all about helping young Chicanas and Native women understand that they can be a part of a university community. The day's events are part of a process meant to de-mystify the "hoops" involved with becoming a student. During a "Tesoro Hunt" the young women collect puzzle pieces from various UTSA offices (Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, etc.). At each office they literally and figuratively get the pieces of the puzzle they need to understand the process. At the end, they sit down in a group and put the puzzles together – what do they get? An awesome puzzle designed by Deborah Vasquez, but also a more complete picture of how the various offices at an university will work for them when they are ready to attend. This treasure hunt engages equity issues about access to universities and the common notion that it is "enough" to admit Chicanas and Native women to campus without considering different levels of access to educational literacy. For students from historically disenfranchised communities without a tradition of university education, issues like knowing that financial aid is available for economic assistance or that campus housing is an option might not be information that is readily available. The lack of key information like issues of financial aid might be factors in young Chicanas and Native women deciding not to attend an institution of higher education.

Employing coalitional organizational strategies with multiple offices on campus and a major community organization (JOVEN) from the greater San Antonio community, the Women's Studies Institute is working to bridge the "access gap" by informing young women of the opportunities available to them. ♦



Left: Juntas girls learn that the university is also about being involved with the Student Activities office.

Right: The future college students learn about academic support at the Tomas Rivera Center.



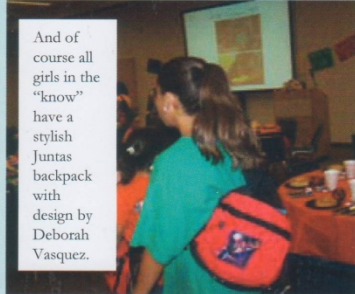
Left: Students learn about technology classrooms and housing by participating in a dual-campus discussion.

THE ADVENTURES OF JUNTAS!

Preparing the future is a big job! The mujeres who participated in organizing Juntas had to flex all of their "shero" muscles. Coalitions between many UTSA Offices and Department took place to plan for the event, and many wonderful women volunteered their time. Thanks to everyone!



All university experiences start with a photo for a student ID.



And of course all girls in the "know" have a stylish Juntas backpack with design by Deborah Vasquez.



Always start with a healthy breakfast! Volunteer, Larissa Mercado-Lopez gets to know the members of the "Gloria Anzaldúa" Group.



Patricia Trujillo facilitated the writing workshop for Juntas participants entitled, "Chicana Superhero Training: Write Yourself a Power Poem." During their superhero training, the young women wrote themselves poems for self-reflection that engaged the workshop topic of "Healthy choices about lifestyles and available resources can help us become more powerful!" The workshop centered on connecting the body, mind, and spirit at school and at home.



Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez, renowned local artist and visiting professor at Our Lady of the Lake University, led the Juntas art workshop. Participants got to design their own superhero outfit which reflected their very own powers. They styled the outfit on Citlaliti, a teen-aged super hero designed by Vasquez, and created a beautiful huipil to take home.



A proud student shares her work, her superhero represents all the strengths she sees in herself and other strong women!



During lunch, many local Chicana superheroes shared words of encouragement with the superheroes-in-training. (Above) Judge Monica Guerrero shares her *testimonio* of being from the Westside, graduating with her degree from UTSA, and her path to becoming a Bexar County Judge.

(Below) Dr. Patricia Quijada, Associate Director of WSI, and Susan Colorado-Burt, Associate Directory of Learning Communities, made their dream of Juntas a reality.



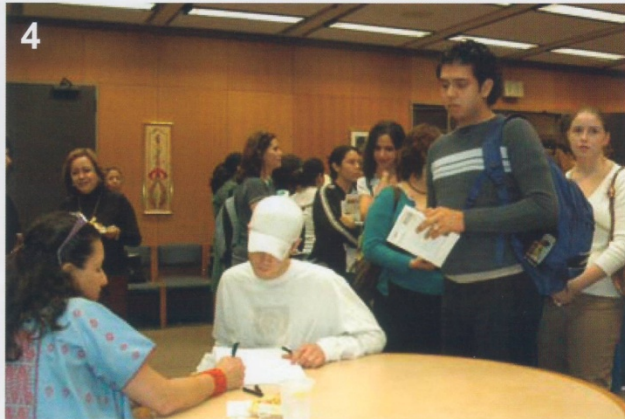
Juntas girls in the university classroom. A peek into the future!

OUR EFFORTS... TO BE CONTINUED!

Did you miss it?



No worries! The 2006 Women's History Month Opening Reception was one for the books! Take a look at some of the action from "UTSA Sandra Cisneros Day 2006." The event was a formal kick-off for an entire month of celebrating Women's History. Hope to see you in 2007!



Smiles All Around

Mario Longoria, WSI Contributing Photographer and Patricia Trujillo, WSI Staff Writer

The positive energy was palpable at the 2006 Women's History Month Opening Reception – smiles were contagious. Maybe it was the tasty reception. Maybe it was good company. Maybe it was celebrating women. Or perhaps all these things combined set the tone for the fabulous kick-off event. It certainly set a festive mood for the rest of Women's History Month 2006!

1. Dr. Sonia Saldívar-Hull, Executive Director of the Women's Studies Institute, with Dr. Ricardo Romo, President of UTSA. 2. Students crowd the room in anticipation of hearing acclaimed Chicana author, Sandra Cisneros speak. 3. Sonia Saldívar-Hull, Dr. Rhonda Gonzales (WHM Co-Chair), Sandra Cisneros, Pam Williams, and Patricia Trujillo (WHM Co-Chair) gather for a commemorative shot. 4. After a candid, generous words were shared by the 2006 Women's Advocate of the Year, she made time to sign books for students, faculty, and staff. 5. Students enjoying the wonderful reception organized by Carolyn Motley. 6. Elaine Perez, UTSA undergraduate student, shares a moment and a thought with the author. 6. Portrait of the artist with one of her longtime, very appreciative readers. ♦

Mujer de Fuerza/Woman of Strength: Demetria Martínez

Sara Ramirez, Staff Writer



A larger-than-capacity crowd filled the Regent's Room of the John Peace Library building to listen to Demetria Martínez, the 2006 Mujeres de Fuerza/Women of Strength distinguished speaker, read from her new book *Confessions of a Berlitz-Tape Chicana* on March 29, 2006. "It's a Women's History Month miracle," whispered Patricia Trujillo, co-chair of the Women's History Month Committee, as attendees poured through the doors. The Committee had not expected such an overwhelming turnout of people to gather at one of the last events for the month. Nevertheless, graduate students from the English program came to the rescue, transporting chairs from a neighboring room for the attendees.



Martínez is an Albuquerque, NM native and resident active in immigrants' rights and the anti-war movement. Earning her Bachelor of Arts from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, she is an author, lecturer, and columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter*, an independent progressive newsweekly. Her other writings include two books of poetry, *Breathing Between the Lines* and *The Devil's Workshop*, and a novel, *Mother Tongue*. This latter piece is partly based upon Martínez's 1988 trial for conspiracy against the U.S. government. Her alleged crime was aiding Salvadoran refugees' entry into the U.S. She was found not guilty on First Amendment grounds.



The Mujeres de Fuerza/Woman of Strength read from her most recent publication, a collection of essays entitled *Confessions of a Berlitz-Tape Chicana*. The title essay describes the plight of the author's generation, the "tongue-tied generation," that grew up listening to Spanish—"usually in the kitchens of extended family"—but not speaking it. Martínez commented that after recognizing that Latina/os may never be fluent in that language, it becomes both a political and spiritual decision to learn and relearn the language. She also read "Lines in the Sand," yet another essay in her new book. In this piece, she describes a problem encountered by many Chicanas at the make-up counter: an inability to find a suitable color for her complexion. Martínez further explains that recognizing the etymology of "cosmetics" may lead one to understand the philosophies of many cultures that hold that "physical beauty is a reflection of harmony, an order arising from good relations with others, nature, and the deities."



The speaker's impact upon the audience became evident during the discussion that followed the reading. "It was great how so many young students were moved by Martínez's reading. They revealed much about their own struggles with identity, politics, religion, and race. Their stories and her facilitation really helped unify everyone in the room," said Marco Cervantes, a doctoral student in the English department. As students related their testimonios, the filled room became a space that magnificently highlighted the recurring theme of the Month, "Testimonios: Celebrating Our Stories." Overall, the 2006 Mujer de Fuerza, Demetria Martínez, proved her strength as she not only gave voice to her "tongue-tied generation" but also beautifully created a space for other "tongue-tied" Latina/os to give voice to theirs. ♦

Photos from top to bottom: Top, the mujer herself, author and activist Demetria Martínez. Second, UTSA students at a luncheon seminar sponsored by the WSI get a chance for some one-on-one discussion with the author. Third, Martínez answers a question asked by students, Carla Gomez and Maya Guirao. Fourth, the miracle documented; Martínez spoke to a beyond capacity crowd in the JPL Regents' Room. Photo credit: Patricia Trujillo and Pamela Williams.

Celebrating Women's History Month

Testimonios Celebrating Our Stories

Women's History Month is busy on the UTSA campus! WSI hosts over 35 events in March to celebrate Women's History Month. Please contact Carolyn Motley to get on mailing list for 2007.

Email carolyn.motley@utsa.edu or by phone at (210) 458-6277.

Female Adolescents Talk about their Bat Mitzvah and Entry into Adulthood

Rosalinda Horowitz, Professor of Counseling and Educational Psychology

Female adolescents, between the ages of 13 and 15 from a range of congregations in San Antonio, traditional to reform, were invited to reflect about their Bat Mitzvah and its significance in their development into womanhood.

The "Bat Mitzvah" is the Jewish ritual that is held in synagogues in the United States to mark the transition from adolescence into adulthood. Traditionally, this ritual occurs at the age of 12, although in some synagogues 13, for females (13 for males) whereby females read from the Torah in Hebrew and/or prepare a speech in the synagogue, as a commentary on the Hebrew text—connecting it to the ancient world and current affairs.

This Women's History Month panel was organized by Hillel at UTSA and co-sponsored with the Women's Studies Institute in conjunction with the course C&I 5743, Reading in the Secondary Schools. The panel was organized by Dr. Rosalind Horowitz, Director, Hillel at UTSA and facilitated by Hillel President, Samantha Tugentman, UTSA undergraduate in the Communications Program. Though the panel focused on the experiences of young women, their mothers were present and participated in the discussions. A reception followed. The speakers on the panel were Jordan Birnbaum, Claire Blumenthal, Shayna Ratner, Lauren Deschner.

Female speakers were given questions in advance of the presentation that focused on their educational backgrounds (both secular and religious Hebrew training for their Bat Mitzvah) their interests, the kinds of reading they do, hobbies they engage in, and future goals. This panel spoke in a UTSA graduate class on adolescents and their reading development which also addressed teenage engagement with media (e.g. movies, videos, computer games, and internet uses) that could enhance or limit literacy development. Among the questions posed were: How difficult was your preparation for you Bat Mitzvah? How do you think your Bat Mitzvah influenced and changed you? Does your community or family treat you differently since this event? Does the congregation put new societal expectations on you in terms of contributions to the community and world at-large?

In summary, a number of the students described highly effective Hebrew instruction as consisting of one-on-one tutoring and genuine interest in their development. The females felt a great deal of support during the Hebrew training—from parents, siblings, peers, and congregational leaders. One student noted, "At Temple people came up to me, and told me what a good job I did (at the Bat Mitzvah). And the week after, they asked me to read from the Torah again". (insert mine). Students indicated they had exceptional guidance in writing and delivering the speeches that were performed before the congregation. Consequently, the females were highly motivated about potential community involvement and pursuing higher education; many had specific goals already defined. These students were by and large active and proud readers of high quality literature including Shakespeare.

The Bat Mitzvah experience provides a means for these females to establish connections with Jewish texts as they begin to form an adult identity and become recognized as part of a community. ♦



Pictured are members of Hillel at UTSA and panelists
Front Row(In front of table): Dr. Rosalind Horowitz with four adolescents who spoke about their Bat Mitzvah.
Back Row: Nicole McLeod, Hillel Assistant; Samantha Tugentman, Hillel Co-President; Mothers standing behind their daughter.

Celebrating Women's History Month through *Testimonios* and Poetry

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Venetia June Pedraza, Ph.D. Student in English, Classics and Philosophy and
President of the Sagebrush Literary Journal at UTSA



Pictured are Sagebrush Literary Journal members.

Names are from left to right first row - Linda Winterbottom, Venetia June Pedraza, Dr. Norma Cantu, Dr. Catherine Kasper, Christina Garza, Jessica Greening Loudermilk, Tina Misite, Stephanie Amsel, Catherine Hauer
Second row - Luke Collins, Chad Clayton, Christopher Albright, Jeremy Richard (photo credit: Venetia June Pedraza)

This year the WSI put together an outstanding Women's History Month project that featured a celebration of *Testimonios* celebrating "Our" stories. One new UTSA group that participated in this event was the *Students for the Literary Journal at UTSA*. This group of undergraduate and graduate English and Creative Writing students brought to UTSA a new Literary Journal, *The Sagebrush Review*, as well as monthly poetry readings that created a space for UTSA students to explore politics, identity, and culture through their writings. Thus, the *Students for the Literary Journal at UTSA* were proud and honored to participate in the WSI's Women's History Month. For the celebration of Women's History Month, The *SLJ at UTSA* put together a poetry reading entitled "Warrior Women: Our Words are Our Weapon," which celebrated female identity, space, truth, and strengths. Panelists were UTSA faculty, staff, and students, and there was support and contributions from Feminist Unitel, Planned Parenthood, and the Women's Resources Center. The poetry reading brought together eighty members from the UTSA community, and together, UTSA celebrated the power of "Telling Our Stories through *Testimonios* and Poetry." ♦

WHM Panel Highlights Latina Research Collaborative Process

Maria Franquiz, Associate Professor of Bicultural Bilingual Studies

Young Latina scholars at the campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio have begun a collective process of supporting each other to do Research for the Education and Advancement of Latin@s (REAL). It is a collaborative group of female junior faculty from UTSA and Trinity whose research focuses on Latin@ students in PreK-University settings. Because Latin@s both shape and are shaped by their journey through "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral, or marginalized positioning" (Soja, 1996: 68) the REAL collaborative creates a strategic space for untenured Latin@ scholars to step out of the disempowering roles typically relegated to women of color in the academy. The stepping out is a safe place to speak out, share, review and analyze social and academic expectations and responsibilities of life in the ivory tower. It is in this space of *confianza* (mutual trust) where personal and collective transformation from an un-tenured position to a tenured one becomes a group journey rather than an isolated journey. What better way to create an academy that is not only respectful and responsive to individual accomplishments but places at center a community of scholarship!

The potential of the REAL collaborative to elevate educational scholarship related to Latin@s is remarkable. As a group REAL planned and shared their ideas with over 100 students, faculty, staff, and interested community members during Women's History Month in March of 2006. The roundtable event was sponsored by the UTSA Women's Studies Institute and was titled, "Actualizing a Latin@ Research Agenda in Education: Current Efforts and New Directions". The topics of the roundtables included, Latin@ Forms of Agency: Capitalizing on Resources for School Achievement (Dr. Rocio Delgado, Dr. Kimberley Cuero, Dr. Veronica Valdez), Latin@, Native American, and Immigrant Youth Identity Formation (Dr. Lucila Ek and Dr. Patricia D. Quijada), Dual-Language Education and Latin@ Student Achievement (Dr. Iliana Alanis & Dr. Mariela Rodriguez), Critical and Policy Perspectives on School-to-University Latin@ Education (Dr. Maricela Oliva & Dr. Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho). Dr. Maria Franquiz served as facilitator of the roundtable event.

One sizable group of seventeen was in attendance at the REAL Roundtables Event. They were brought by Dr. Claudia Peralta-Nash, chair of the Bilingual Education Department at Boise State University in Idaho. These graduate students came to San Antonio for one week, specifically visiting the dual language bilingual programs at Bonham and Colonial Hills Elementary schools. They also visited Dr. Howard Smith's class at the UTSA-DT campus and the REAL Roundtable Event at the 1604 campus. The students were so impressed that they decided their university would visit San Antonio again during Women's History Month in March 2007. This is evidence that San Antonio school districts have a lot to offer to teacher professional training and development. It also shows that the REAL Collaborative's Research Agenda is reaching in and beyond Texas. We applaud your Latina vision and its dissemination—for it is in your scholarship that you elevate the status of our entire Latin@ community. ♦



Transgender Warrior at Peace: Becky Cross 1953-2006

Sally Said, Co-Chair of Foreign Languages at University of the Incarnate Word; and Lenora Perry-Samaniego, Ph.D. Student, UTSA English, Classics and Philosophy

Rebecca Lynn Cross (1953-2006), a doctoral student and instructor in English, died July 7 while returning from a summer session at Diné College in the Navajo Nation. For five years, she and an Incarnate Word colleague had worked to develop a writing pedagogy based on Navajo cultural teachings. Becky completed an M.A. in English at UTSA (2001), and was finishing

her dissertation on the writings of Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa, as a member of the first cohort of students in the new Ph.D. Program in Latino/a Literature and Rhetoric. She taught Composition and Literary Criticism and Analysis at UTSA. Becky also held a B.A. *summa cum laude* in English from Incarnate Word (1998). Prior to beginning her Ph.D., she had taught at Incarnate Word and at Diné College in the Navajo Nation, and had retired after 22 years in the U.S. Army as instructor of preventive medicine and as combat medic in the Special Forces.

While at UTSA, Becky received the award of Most Outstanding Student in the College of Fine Arts and Humanities (2000) and Faculty Excellence Award from the Office of Disability Services (2004). She had also served as graduate student representative on the English Ph.D. Program Committee.

During the summer of 2005, Becky, who was transgendered, went to Thailand to present a paper at an Asian gender conference and stayed to have her sexual reassignment surgery. She was recognized internationally as a transgender activist when, in Geneva to draft a transgender rights statement for ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) in March of 2006, she was elected as one of two ILGA board members from North America. She had co-founded and continued to facilitate the transgender support group SAGA (San Antonio Gender Association).

Becky remained active in the Incarnate Word Sisters' organization Women's Global Connection. She had participated as a presenter and facilitator at their international conference in 2004 and as presenter, facilitator and co-editor of the proceedings at the May, 2006 conference, Women Making a Difference: Affirming Diversity. On the planning committee for this conference, she represented the UTSA Women's Studies Institute. Becky had also co-founded the Headwaters Project, a group that oversees a conservation trust of land adjacent to the UIW campus and had volunteered at Visitation House, a home for single mothers and their children, as a tutor in English composition. Among her greatest talents was her ability to find each person's unique abilities, and make those around her feel special. Her life was the example by which she dismantled the barriers of gender bias and ignorance. Becky's students, colleagues, and friends in her many disciplines and discourse communities will greatly miss her firm voice and gentle spirit. ♦



The Rebecca Lynn Cross Book Relief Fund

This fund was established by doctoral student Yndalecio (Isaac) Hinojosa in memory of Rebecca Cross, a member of the first cohort of the English Ph.D. Program who passed away in 2006. The fund is a resource for UTSA doctoral students in English to support the purchase of books and research materials. English PhD students who are in the early stages of their studies are especially encouraged to apply. Applications will be evaluated by the Ph.D. Graduate Program Committee. The maximum amount for each award is \$300.

If you would like to make a donation to the Rebecca Lynn Cross Book Relief Fund and support the work of doctoral students in English, Classics, and Philosophy please contact Roxanne Cuevas at the ECAP Office at 458-7374, or by email at roxanne.cuevas@utsa.edu. Or you can drop off a check payable to "Department of English, Classics, and Philosophy" at the Main ECAP Office (MB 2.03.14).

Making UTSA Even More Welcoming for LGBT Individuals

Sara B. Oswalt, Assistant Professor, Health and Kinesiology
David Kessler, Academic Advisor, College of Liberal and Fine Arts

UTSA has been seen as an accepting place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals with sexual orientation included in the non-discrimination policy and Lambda Alliance and the Alpha Lambda Tau (ALT) fraternity for gay/bi/trans/friendly male college students on campus. However, since the arrival of ALT in 2004, even more is happening on campus to support LGBT students, faculty and staff.

Allies Program During the 2004/2005 academic year, with the support of the Vice President for Student Affairs, a group of 15 faculty and staff members began meeting to develop an organized program. The intent of an Allies Program is to empower all administrators, faculty, staff and students to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment for all LGBT members of our campus community. The hallmark of this program is the visibility it creates when an Ally posts a placard or wears a lapel pin with the Allies Program logo. By providing support, resources, and educational programs, Allies will help LGBT students achieve their greatest potential and remain a vital part of the UTSA community. One of the primary goals of this initiative is to offer trainings that will help individuals be an Ally. By the end of Spring semester 2006, nearly 80 individuals had been trained as Allies at UTSA. If you are a member of the UTSA campus and would like more information on the program or to attend a training during fall semester, please contact David Kessler at david.kessler@utsa.edu.

Campus Climate Survey In Fall 2005, a Campus Climate survey was conducted to ask LGBT students, faculty and staff about their experiences at UTSA. Over 100 individuals (n = 107) completed the survey. Staff were the largest cohort responding to the survey (41.1%), followed by undergraduate students (35.5%). Regarding experiences at UTSA, over 15% experienced derogatory remarks, 14.1% experienced verbal harassment, and 10.9% felt pressure to be silent about their sexual orientation. While most did not experience this overt discrimination, other still felt pressure: 52.4% concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation; 60.2% avoided disclosing their sexual orientation/gender identity to students for fear of negative consequences. These results demonstrate the need and the importance of initiatives like the Allies Program. For more details about the survey and results, please contact Dr. Sara Oswalt at sara.oswalt@utsa.edu.

Inclusion of Gender Identity The President's Affirmative Action and Diversity Committee, in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Diversity, has submitted revised language to include gender identity in UTSA's non-discrimination policy. This proposal will be reviewed by the chief management officers at UTSA, and if accepted, then by the Office of General Counsel for the UT-System. ♦

Symbols of the LGBT Movement

David Kessler, Academic Advisor, College of Liberal and Fine Arts

Though there are several more symbols of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Movement, the rainbow flag and the pink triangle are commonly used to identify the movement. Here is a brief explanation of their historical significance:



The Rainbow Flag – The rainbow flag has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community as its own design. It depicts not the shape of the rainbow but its colors are arranged in horizontal stripes. Created in 1978 for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Celebration by Gilbert Baker, it was inspired by the "Flag of the Races" which had five stripes, one each for the colors of humankind's skin. Major gay and lesbian parades in New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto began to fly the six-striped Rainbow Flag. It is prominently displayed at all homosexual events. In a few short years, the flag spread worldwide to represent the gay movement. Its success is not due to any official recognition but to the widespread spontaneous adoption by members of the community it represents.



The Pink Triangle – When the Allied forces liberated the Nazi concentration camps, the horrors they discovered shocked a disbelieving world. At these camps, prisoners were classified by a set of colored triangles; pink was reserved for homosexuals. When liberation came in the mid-1940s, most of the survivors were set free. The U.S. Army personnel, however, took homosexuals from the camps to Allied prisons. Since the 1940s, the pink triangle has become one of the most recognizable and powerful symbols for gay people and the oppression they have faced throughout the history of Western Civilization. The pink triangle was a commonly used insignia throughout the early gay liberation movements. It appears in photographs and film footage of the early marches and demonstrations. It is a reminder of the statement, "Never Again!" ♦

Fall 2006 Events

WSI News 10



Want to get involved in next year's planning?

Contact the Women's Studies Institute

We would love to hear your great ideas!

Las hijas de Juan:
Daughters Betrayed



Josie Méndez-Negrete

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Brown Bags

Patricia Trujillo, WSI Staff Writer

For the past two years, Women's Studies Institute has been a part of the P.E.A.C.E. (Putting and End to Abuse through Community Efforts) Initiative's city-wide calendar planning for Domestic Violence Awareness Month each October. For the second year, WSI hosted a month-long series of Brown Bag discussion centering on issues of Domestic Violence Awareness. The discussions are informal. Students participating are welcome to bring their lunch and their opinions as issues ranging from committing to living a non-violent life, speaking up against violence, and even having a career in family violence law. There were three discussions in the series:

Breaking the Barriers: Careers in Family and Domestic Violence Law

Judge Monica Guerrero, Bexar County Court Judge, shared her experience in committing her professional career to family violence law. Having graduated from UTSA, her story resonated with many of the students in the audience. Judge Guerrero shared her testimonio about serving the family court in San Antonio, and she encouraged members of the audience to consider this often underprivileged but very necessary field of law as a career option.

Breaking the Cycle: How Can Men Get Involved with Stopping Violence Against Women

Domestic violence is often considered a "woman's problem." This discussion's theme dealt with how men can actively work to help change the culture of violence against women. Guest speakers were Frank Castro of the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign, Tony Villanueva, board member of the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, Chad Campbell of the student group "Men Against Violence" at Texas State University, and Jessica Muniz, of the UTSA Women's Resource Center. Together the panel led a discussion about the nature of re-thinking violence in our families and strategies in empowering men and boys to stop the perpetuation of violence in their own lives. This panel was organized in collaboration with the UTSA Women's Resource Center.

Breaking the Silence: Interactive Writing Workshop with Patricia Castillo

Sara Ramirez, WSI Research Assistant, organized the final brown bag discussion of the month. It was an interactive workshop where participants were presented with various scenarios (clips from movies) concerning relationships and then asked to write about what they had seen. Patricia Castillo, executive director of the PEACE Initiative facilitated the conversation. There were many undergraduate students in attendance who engaged the issues presented to them hopefully taking with them that "writing" through an issue can help empower an action plan to obtain help or support if necessary.

Dr. Josie Méndez-Negrete: Reading from *Las Hijas de Juan: Daughter's Betrayed*

The feature event for Domestic Violence Awareness Month took place on November 9, 2006. Dr. Josie Méndez-Negrete, Associate Professor in the Bilingual-Bicultural Studies Department and Director of Mexican American Studies, read from her book *Las Hijas de Juan: Daughters Betrayed*. "*Las hijas de Juan* shatters the silence surrounding experiences of incest within a working-class Mexican American family. Both a feminist memoir and a hopeful meditation on healing, it is Josie Méndez-Negrete's story of how she, her siblings and mother survived years of violence and sexual abuse at the hands of her father."

Dr. Mendez-Négrete spoke to a packed Southwest Room in the Durango Building at the Downtown Campus. Her performance included a candid discussion of her family, reading from the text, and the singing of traditional songs. Dr. Méndez-Negrete's personal strength and theoretical savvy puts the concepts of Chicana feminism to work within the academy. Her work stresses the importance of and the need to connect mind, body and spirit. ♦

A Place of Potential: WSI's 4th Annual Welcome Reception

Megan Sibbett, WSI Staff Writer

The Women's Studies Institute began the 2006/07 academic year with its 4th annual Welcome Reception for UTSA's newest faculty. Among the thirty-five tenure/tenure track new faculty hires were Professor Sonja Lanehart, the Brackenridge Endowed Chair for the Department of English, Classics and Philosophy; Assistant Professor Irina Solovyova from the College of Architecture, Interior Design Program; and Professor Harry Jarrett, the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry within the Department of Chemistry. Linda Lopez George, the new Director of Corporate and Business Relations was also recognized.

As Dr. Saldívar-Hull, Professor of English and Executive Director of the Women's Studies Institute welcomed the new faculty, she explained the uniqueness of the Institute and how it functions within its three distinct units of research, academics and outreach. Later during the reception, as many of the new faculty were eating and mingling, an exciting energy came from the possible connections the new faculty members sensed regarding the Women's Studies Institute.

Along with introducing new faculty, this year's Women's Studies Institute scholarship recipients, Lori Rodriguez, the graduate awardee, and Angela White, the undergraduate awardee, were also recognized. White, who will graduate with her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, stated that having a minor in Women and Gender Studies (housed by the Institute) has greatly enhanced her psychology studies, adding "I will be well-equipped to help women change their lives for the better." Rodriguez, a Ph.D. candidate in English, Classics, and Philosophy was selected from all the graduate student applicants for an essay she wrote on recording artist and Tejana icon, Selena.

Following the recognition of White and Rodriguez, Dr. Patricia Quijada, Associate Director of the Women's Studies Institute, elaborated past events, focusing on the JUNTAS conference. Patricia Trujillo, Assistant to the Director, then told the new faculty about exciting upcoming events including Brown Bag discussions and guest speakers during Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the Institutes crowning event, Women's History Month.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm surrounding the Women's Studies Institute, many of the new and veteran faculty stayed long after the reception, building relationships, discussing ideas, sharing plans, and eating delicious food. ♦



Photos: (Above) Attendees at the Welcome Reception wait for the program to begin. (Center) Angela White, undergraduate scholarship recipient, is presented with a certificate by Dr. Saldívar-Hull. (Right) Lori Beth Rodriguez, graduate scholarship recipient, share a congratulatory moment. Photo credit: Megan Sibbett.

Sandra Cisneros Day and Opening Reception continued from page 1
Sara Ramirez, WSI Staff Writer

Accepting the award before the lively crowd, Cisneros said, "And I'm not even dead yet." She then spoke on her trails and beginnings as a Chicana writer. She encouraged women to follow their hearts, stating, "You will make some beautiful mistakes" but you "have to have *ganas* and passion if you want to become an artist." Cisneros pointed out how women, including Dr. Saldívar-Hull, make sacrifices for the sake of their careers. Students in the audience nodded their heads in agreement.

As Cisneros concluded her remarks with a question and answer session that became an intimate dialogue with students in the audience, her comments reflected a spiritual generosity that truly exemplified her artistry as a women's advocate. The happy celebrants of the festivities which started as the kick-off of Women's History Month but ended up as the inaugural Sandra Cisneros Day were witness to UTSA history, proving once again, that women's history is everyone's history! ♦

WSI Newsletter 2006 Retrospective

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Staff Writers and Photographers

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Megan Sibbett
Pamela Williams

Contributing Writers

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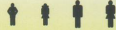
Announcements



Welcome Molly Jaye Williams!

Congratulations to new parents Pamela and Chris Williams. Pam was an awesome staff member during 2005-06. Best wishes to the happy family and welcome to one of the newest member of the WSI family!

**Interested in earning a minor in
Women and Gender Studies?**



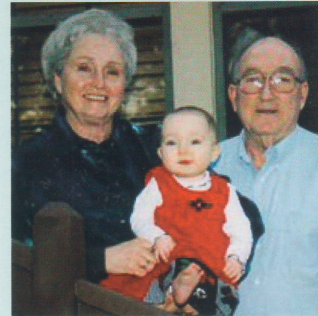
Sign up for the foundational course,
WGS 2013, and visit your advisor.

Drop by WSI for additional information!

carolyn.motley@utsa.edu
(210) 458-6277

Welcome Katelyn
Piper Hoffmeyer!

Congratulations proud grandparents Carolyn and Darryl Motley. Piper was born May 2, 2006 and has brought nothing but joy with her into the world. Warm wishes to Carolyn and her family and welcome to another member of the WSI family! (We keep growing and growing!)



DO YOU HAVE A LAPTOP?

Because we've got a tote! You can be cool like WSI Research Assistants Sara Ramirez and Megan Sibbett sporting your computer in this trendy tote! The new WSI Laptop Totes are in and you can place your laptop in our stylish tote for an \$8.00 donation to the Women's Studies Institute.

Drop by MS 3.01.14
or call 458-6285.

You know you want one!



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